

Lithuania

A Sturdy People & Their New-won Freedom

By Florence Farmborough

Special Correspondent of "The Times"

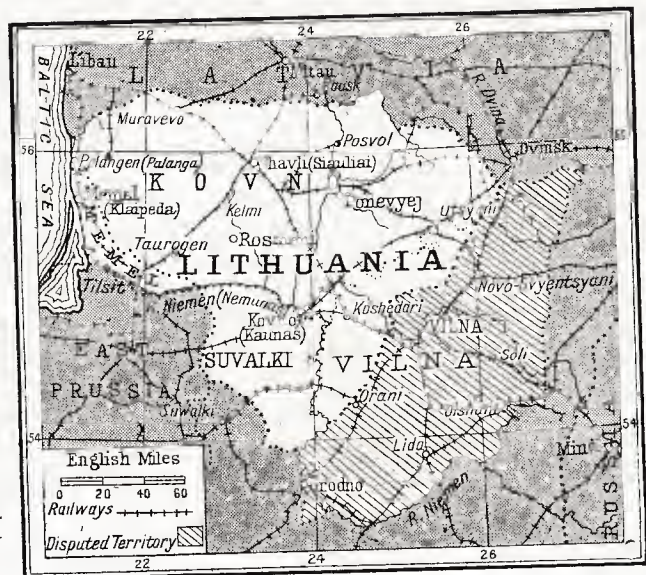
THE name Lithuania conveys little or nothing to the mind of the average Westerner. Possibly he may recollect seeing it in print in the daily papers, or he may recall it dimly to mind as one of the "Mushroom States" which sprang up so suddenly out of the black night that enveloped Europe between 1914-18. However that may be, it is certain that when at length peaceful dawn stole anew across the Continent, these Mushroom States were there, nearly a dozen of them, each enjoying a fairly assured position among the recognized nations of Europe, and most of them standing within their own recovered ethnographic boundaries.

More than half of these free States have arisen out of the chaos attendant on the overthrow of the vast Russian Empire. Three of the four bordering on the Baltic Sea—Finland, Esthonia, and Latvia—actually formed part of that Empire, whereas Lithuania Major was under Russian, and Lithuania Minor under German suzerainty.

As a terra incognita, in the literal sense of the term, Lithuania stands among the older civilizations of Europe. The fact that her name and influence have almost been blotted out betokens only too plainly a lamentable state of affairs in which Western apathy and ignorance have had too free a hand; for Lithuania, it must be understood, is no new country without a history. So comparatively late as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, she

was the most powerful of all the nations of Northern Europe, and at the zenith of her prosperity and power her boundaries extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea. It was in the fourteenth century that Lithuania helped to clear the lower Dnieper of the Mongols, and in 1410, at Tannenberg, during the reign of Vytautas (Vitold) the Great, she won her famous and decisive victory over the Knights of the Teutonic Order. During this period of her power, Lithuania is mentioned more than once in English history and literature. In the "Canterbury Tales," Chaucer's English knight visits that country and fights there, and it is an interesting fact that Chaucer's name for Lithuania is "Leetuwe" (Lietuva), which is the correct word for Lithuania in Lithuanian; the latter being used only abroad.

As regards their "right to exist," it should be noted that the Lithuanians



THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

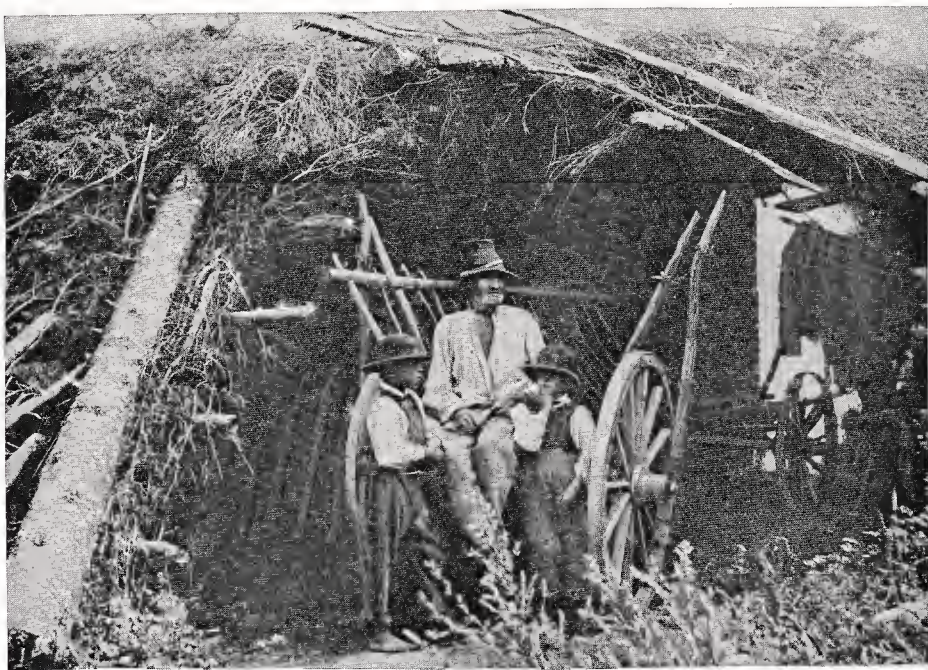
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are one of the most ancient peoples in Europe, and seem to have first settled down in their territory on the Baltic Sea—between the Vistula and the Salis rivers—at a time when Western Europe was still covered by primeval forests. They appear to possess, therefore, a just and an authentic title to those lands which they at present occupy—lands on which, and over which, their ancestors lived and ruled from time immemorial. Whatever else betide, modern views and principles would not be likely to deny Lithuanians the right to national existence.

The history of the Lithuanians is closely bound up with that of the Letts of Latvia, their kinsmen, with whom—together with the old Borussians, or Prussians—they formed the Baltic group of the Eastern branch of the Indo-European family. The Lithuanians and the Letts have held tenaciously to their languages, which bear a striking resemblance to each other. The roots

of most of the words are alike, and the grammatical construction has remained the same. This is remarkable, inasmuch as the historical fortunes of the two countries have been varied and diverse, involving the complete drifting apart of the two peoples.

The Letto - Lithuanian languages, which form a distinct family, are more closely allied to the Sanskrit of ancient India than any living tongue. Even to the uninitiated, the difference from all other European dialects should be apparent. As Professor Meillet, of the Collège de France, observes: "If you wish to hear from human lips some echo of what the language originally common to Indo-Europeans may have been, go and listen to Lithuanian peasants talking." The Letto - Lithuanian languages must therefore be classed as the oldest in Europe, older even than Latin and ancient Greek; both of which have long ceased to hold a place amongst living languages. Kant, the



AMONG THE LIBERTY-LOVING LANDOWNERS OF LITHUANIA

This white-haired grandsire sees now only good times ahead. After long exile in America, his emigrant son has returned to a liberated Lithuania and to the old folk under the parental roof in a village of the Suvalki district. Landownership is a passion with the Lithuanian peasant, and having gained possession of a plot of ground he attaches himself to it with all his energy



MOTLEY MARKETERS KEEPING A KEEN LOOK-OUT FOR CUSTOMERS

The market places of the provincial towns of South Lithuania present interesting scenes when the country folk gather for the weekly marts. Many of them tramp for miles with baskets and bags of garden produce from their remote villages, and are content to stand in the bleak squares throughout a winter's day until their wares have disappeared or the waning light fails them

Photo, Florence Farmborough

great philosopher, who was born in the eighteenth century in East Prussia of Lithuanian descent, in his introduction to Rubig's Lithuanian Dictionary, asserts that their language (which, according to the celebrated Russian linguist, Fortunatoff, contains no fewer than 75,000 words) should be preserved "as the best means for the dissemination of culture and advancement among the Lithuanians, as the best expositor for linguists in their study of languages, and as the pharos to the means of communication of the races of antiquity."

The Lithuanians are the most numerous branch of the Baltic Group. Their misfortunes may be said to have commenced in the twelfth century, when, on the one hand, the Poles, assisted by the two German religious

Orders—the Teutonic Knights and the Swordbearers—and, on the other, the Russians, took it upon themselves to attempt the Christianisation of the Lithuanians at the point of the sword. A baptism with fire and sword, however, naturally aroused fierce indignation, and was resisted by the people with all their might.

Early in the thirteenth century Lithuania became a Grand Duchy. The Grand Duke Mindaugas (Mindove) finally consented to be baptised, and, as a reward for his submission Pope Innocent IV. crowned him King of Lithuania (1252). On discovering, however, that his conversion to Christianity had for its real purpose the undoing of his country, which was to be given over to pillage and plunder, he recanted, and, in order to protect himself and his



SOME OF LITHUANIA'S POOR POPULATION AWAITING THE DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF RATIONS

Winter is a hard time for a peasantry that is suffering the consequences of prolonged, relentless warfare, and when snow lies thick on the country landscape and icicles glisten from the thatched roofs, many of the Lithuanian poor would fare ill save for the timely and liberal aid of local relief committees. The sting of poverty has deprived rural life of much of its attractiveness, especially where the habits and customs of the Lithuanian natives are concerned, and more than one quaint traditional ceremony has disappeared, despite the peasants' keen conservatism. No chance of their inability to come with the festive occasion



AFTER THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THOSE WHO FELL IN ACTION FIGHTING FOR THE LITHUANIAN REPUBLIC
 The Great War gave to Lithuania, as to many another country, the opportunity to regain her freedom and political independence. How profoundly her ambitions in this direction had taken hold on the national spirit may be gathered from the impassioned utterances of her people addressed at the outset of the war to their brothers in the Lithuanian settlement of America: "We must emerge free, or die fighting for freedom. Lithuanians have vitality and strength enough to be the equals of other nations. We must win the right to mould our own destiny and our own future. . . ."

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau



WITH THE PEASANT PROPRIETOR IN SYLVAN SURROUNDINGS

Many of Lithuania's rural homesteads are charmingly situated amid the beautiful forests for which the country has been famed since ancient times. Wood, naturally, is extensively used in house-construction, but, quite apart from practical purposes, the peasants delight in the forests, and their songs and legends constantly refer to woodland trees as to something inspiring and sacred



COSY CORNER OF A HUMBLE COTTAGE HOME

The rough bed on the earth floor; the strings of neatly-strung onions on the wooden walls; the large stove, the flat top of which provides a warm resting-place on cold winter nights; the pot of potatoes from which the family feeds ad libitum when hunger calls; and the "lopschis," or baby's cradle, suspended from the roof's rafters—all are part and parcel of the home of the poorer-class Lithuanian

Photos, Florence Farmborough



WOMEN FARM-WORKERS ENJOYING A FRIENDLY GOSSIP

Lithuanian land-workers are an industrious community, both men and women being accustomed to all manual tasks which vary with the seasons, thus becoming thoroughly experienced in the various branches of agriculture. The monotony of labour is relieved by song, for the Lithuanians are a music-loving people, and their numerous melodious folk-songs or dainos are a national heritage which no hostile influence has ever succeeded in destroying



KING OF THE PUMPKIN FIELD: A PRIZE SPECIMEN

For both table and stable the pumpkin is a useful plant to the Lithuanian farmer; its fruit boiled or baked makes a palatable dish and, ripe and unripe, affords a valuable fodder for cattle and other animals. This fine yellow and green fruit grows on trailing vines, and is of great variety in size and shape, the larger kinds acquiring a weight of some 40 to 80 lb.

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people, initiated a policy of defensive warfare, in which both he himself and his successors persisted, apparently with success. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, Lithuania voluntarily embraced Christianity, and since that time has adhered staunchly to the doctrines of the Roman Church.

Lithuania United with Poland

Poland took the first step towards effecting a union with Lithuania in 1386, when Hedvig, Queen of Poland, was given in marriage to the Lithuanian Grand Duke, Jogaila (Jagello), who by this alliance became King of Poland. Since that period the Poles have left no stone unturned to maintain a permanent political nexus between the two nations. The union, however, was never wholly established until 1569, when, consequent on the Convention of Lublin, Lithuania, not without considerable opposition, was welded into a single republic with Poland—the Lithuanians nevertheless retaining their own treasury, laws, and courts of justice, as well as their own army.

Polish influences gradually prevailed, and the chief means of bringing about the complete subjection of the Lithuanians was the proscription of their language. A violent propaganda was set going throughout the country, to the disparagement of the Lithuanian tongue. As was declared by Nicholas Dauksza, one of Lithuania's most venerated scholars, famous as a preacher and a translator of the Bible: "To take away from a nation its own language is equivalent to taking away the sun out of the heavens, to destroying the world-order, to imprisoning the very life and soul of the people."

Fatal Consequences of the Union

Keen resentment followed on this drastic measure. On the part of the peasantry it took the form of open rebellion, but it was only of a fitful and an ineffective character, for the peasants were at that time being reduced rapidly to the condition of serfs. On the other

hand, the Lithuanian aristocracy was, slowly but surely, being Polonised. The process was marked by bribery and corruption, and the barter of privileges and concessions was of frequent occurrence. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Poland fell, disrupted by anarchy, and in this downfall Lithuania, owing to her association with Poland, was involved.

The ruin of the country being thus brought about, Greater Lithuania (Prussian Lithuania, or Lithuania Minor, was still under German control, having been conquered in the fifteenth century by the Teutonic Knights) fell under the dominion of her great neighbour, Russia, and her old-time prosperity and power passed completely away. Thenceforth a never-ceasing persecution dogged the steps of this unfortunate people. Every possible attempt was made to de-nationalise them and to bend them to the Russian yoke.

Russia's Pitiless Tyranny

The Lithuanian Statute was supplanted by Russian law; and all official posts, from the highest to the lowest, were held by Russians. The land was expropriated; agricultural societies were suppressed; the Lithuanian language, as already intimated, was abolished; and now even private instruction in the native tongue was punishable by heavy fines; religious schools and societies were closed in order to compel the people to forsake their faith; but what seemed to be the severest blow of all, so far as Lithuanian progress and culture were concerned, was the suppression of the Press and of the continued use of Latin characters in printing in the sixties of the nineteenth century.

This prohibition exercised its depressing influence upon the people for forty years. Nevertheless, although they were not allowed to print books in their own language within their own borders, they arranged to have them printed in Germany and in the United States of America, and relied only on such literature as could be smuggled across the



ARTISTIC PRODUCTIONS OF THE LITHUANIAN SEAMSTRESS

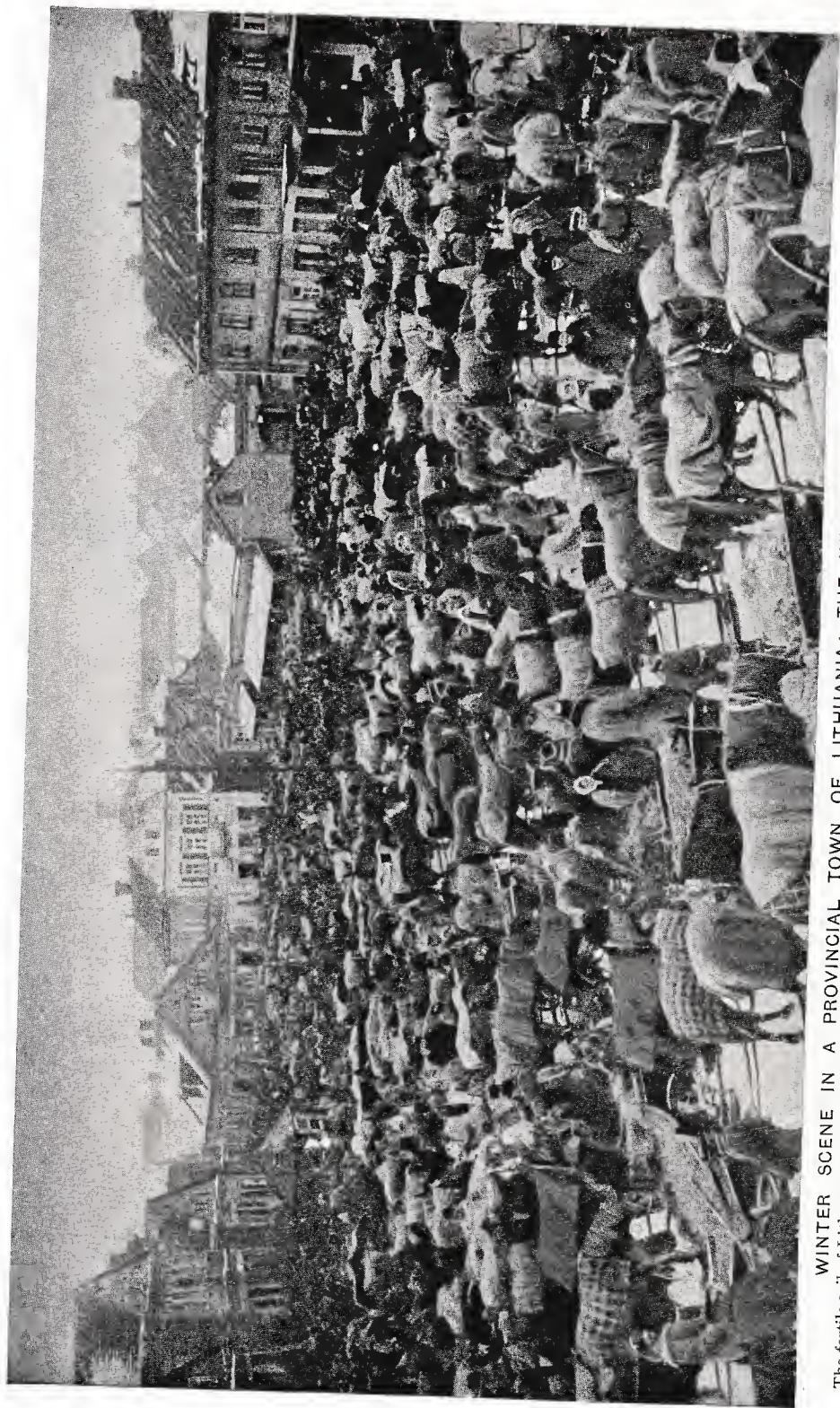
Lithuanian women have long been versed in the art of needlework, and their language is particularly copious in expressions relating to handwork of this description. In former times embroidery on white material was held in high esteem, for white was worn for all important church festivals, colours being more in fashion for everyday use, and the value of a wardrobe was estimated by its embroideries.

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau



WHERE THE PEASANT'S NATIVE INGENUITY IS TURNED TO ACCOUNT IN ARCHITECTURE AND CARPENTRY

Comfortable, compact, and convenient are perhaps the most suitable epithets to describe the modern dwelling-house of the Lithuanian peasant. Of wooden construction, with neatly thatched roof, its appearance is usually a very pleasing one. Adroit with his hands, and possessing natural inventive faculties, the Lithuanian has little difficulty in erecting his own homestead. His skill in all crafts connected with woodwork has been proverbial for many hundreds of years, and a writer of the seventeenth century quotes the proverb: "The Lithuanian is a woodman."



WINTER SCENE IN A PROVINCIAL TOWN OF LITHUANIA: THE WEEKLY MARKET IN FULL SWING

The fertile soil of Lithuania is responsible for her well-stocked markets, and there are but few country districts which cannot boast of a steady increase in all that pertains to agricultural industry, for Lithuania is, pre-eminently, an agricultural country, and her statistics establish the fact that she can rely almost entirely on the material produced within her own borders for a self-contained independent existence. This busy scene says much for the nation's powers of recuperation, and despite the destruction wrought by the Great War and subsequent enemy occupation, notable progress is being made in the development of trade



ORTHODOX HEBREW ABSORBED IN TALMUDIC MEDITATION

Of the great multitude of Jews spread about Europe, the majority still stand firm to the old Mosaic law given at Sinai. In Lithuania, this most devout of peoples and most skilled in the commercial world has retained the specific characteristics of the Ancient Semites; and phylactery, arm thongs, and shawl figure in the prayer equipment of the orthodox, by whom all religious rites are zealously observed

Photo, Florence Farmborough

frontier. This proceeding was naturally attended by great personal risk. It was at this time that several thousand Lithuanians were imprisoned and sent to Siberia for no greater crime than using the Lithuanian prayer-book, which, printed for them in Prussia, had been smuggled into the country.

For more than a century the Lithuanians plodded along as best they could under Russia's pitiless rule. Already enfeebled by the exhausting Polish regime, their sufferings and disabilities were repeated under the Russian bureaucracy with a two-fold intensity. But the spirit of the people neither wavered nor broke; and at the first opportunity they were ready to stand up for their national rights.

The Lithuanian renaissance may be said to date from 1905, coinciding with the Russian revolutionary débâcle

following on the unsuccessful war with Japan. For it had then seemed expedient to their Russian masters to widen somewhat the sphere of liberty and to allow Lithuanians the freedom of the Press anew. A regeneration of the people took place as a consequence, and the energy and enthusiasm of the intellectual leaders have never flagged in the good work of educating the masses and raising them above the degradation inseparable from serfdom.

Like their Lettish neighbours, the Lithuanians are primarily an agricultural people. Nine-tenths of the population are occupied on the land, the soil of which is rich and fertile, being somewhat more productive than that found in the adjacent Baltic States. The rearing and breeding of animals is one of the important branches of agriculture, and although crop-growing is attended by

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most satisfactory results, the peasants for the most part find it more profitable to produce wool, butter, cheese, and eggs. Textile industries, sugar-refining, tanning, and paper manufacture prospered before the war. The amber industry continues to exist in Lithuania Minor, and should not be overlooked, as the Eastern Baltic shore, especially along the Latvian and Lithuanian coasts, is perhaps the only region in the world where the collecting and manufacture of amber form a practical industry.

The Lithuanian farmers now live for the most part on their own holdings, often in isolation from the villages. Many of their farmhouses are delightfully situated, and are surrounded by gardens and orchards, which give a picturesque and an agreeable impression dotted here and there about the level countryside. Several of the larger estates have been broken up in order to

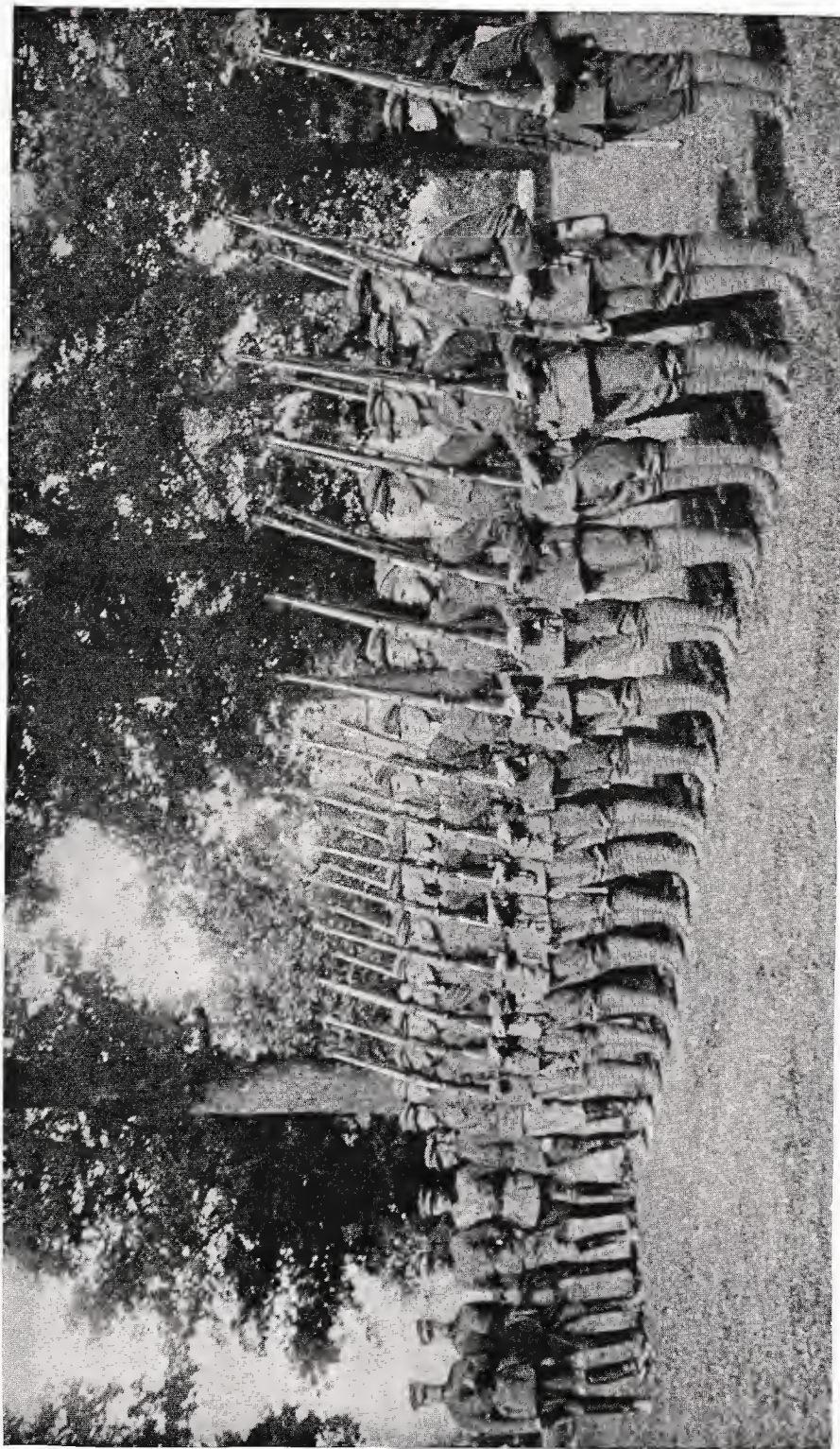
appease the land-hunger of the peasantry. The number of small holdings has greatly increased in consequence; for, provided a man is not afraid of work—and the Lithuanian peasant is a born agriculturist—he can make a fair living from the cultivation of fifteen or twenty acres of land.

His livestock consists usually of a cow, and perhaps a few sheep and pigs; a horse he must have, and, generally, poultry may be seen strutting about his miniature courtyard. The products of his farm will consist of rye, the main crop of the country, 41 per cent. of the total arable land being given over to its cultivation; barley and oats, a little wheat, and, of course, vegetables. Flax is another principal product, and in most houses a spinning-wheel and a crudely-fashioned loom dominate the poorly-furnished rooms; the contents of the family wardrobe are usually



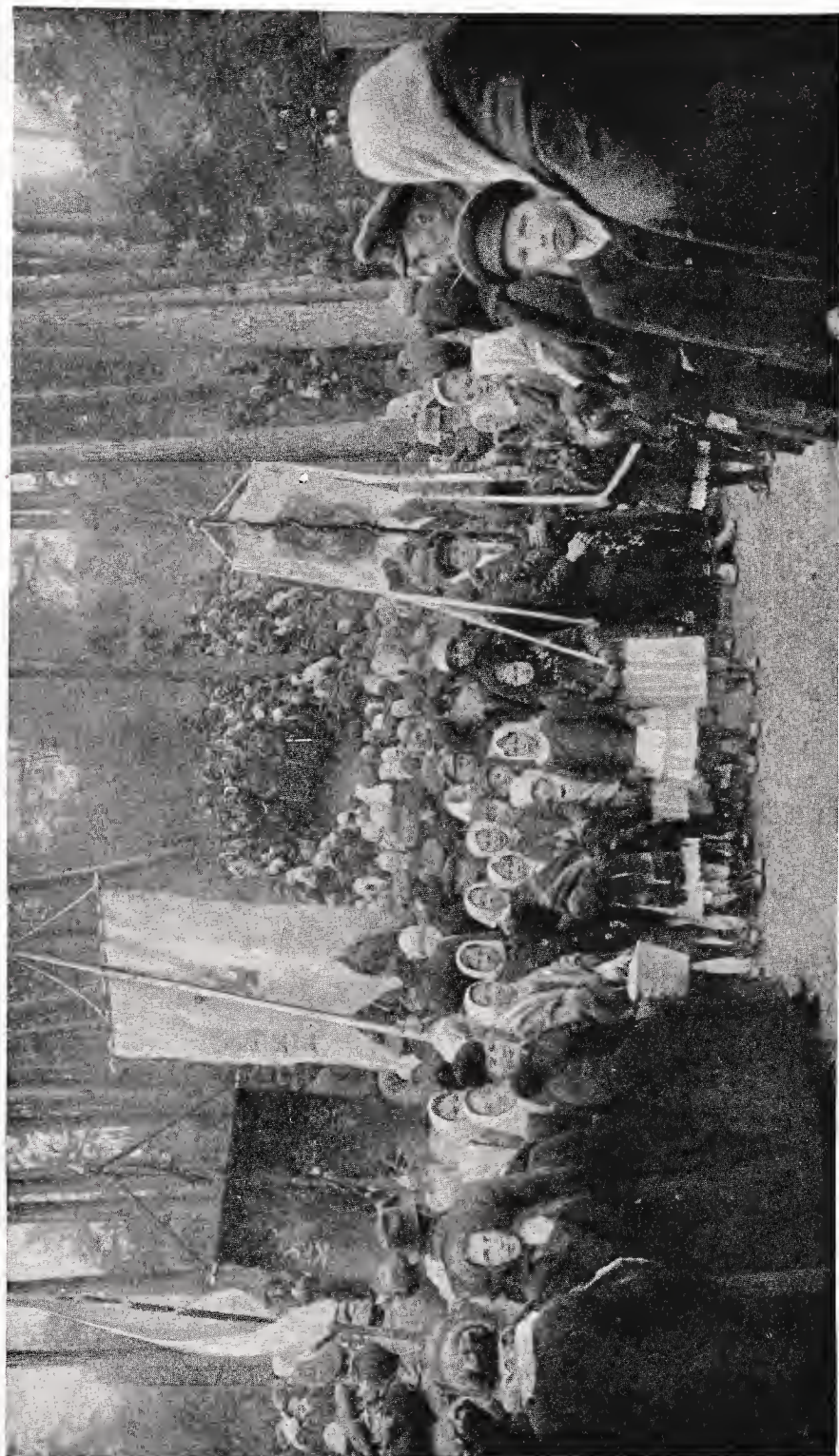
BIBLIOPHILE AT THE SHOP OF A JEWISH ANTIQUE DEALER

Jews are the chief shopkeepers in Lithuania, as the Lithuanians are for the most part too fond of land labour and the amenities of rural life to take kindly to the restrictions of urban existence. The keen brains of the enterprising Hebrew therefore cater for the needs of a mixed clientèle, and are able, not infrequently, to satisfy even the fastidious tastes of the connoisseur



FUTURE PROTECTORS OF THEIR COUNTRY'S PEACE : LITHUANIAN MILITARY CADETS IN TRAINING

Although naturally averse from militarism, Lithuania has nevertheless found it necessary to organize a national force for purely defensive purposes, and like the other newly-formed States, is not ignoring the necessity of teaching the young idea to shoot. The standing army consists approximately of 50,000 men. The patriotism of the Lithuanians has manifested itself in diverse forms, none, however, so admirable as the way in which they rallied together from many parts of the world and stood up to fight for their national independence.



INHABITANTS OF POLANGEN, THE BALTIC WATERING-PLACE, WELCOMING THE LITHUANIAN TROOPS

Under the Simpson boundary award Latvia ceded the Baltic coastal town of Polangen (Palanga) to Lithuania, the government of which is making praiseworthy efforts to develop its valuable medicinal springs and to convert it into an up-to-date watering-place and an ocean port. Historical evidence shows that during the Middle Ages there was a deep-sea harbour at Polangen, and Vítaldas (Vitold) the Great did much to promote its importance. Now that Lithuania has become an independent State it is very probable that the prosperity of Polangen as a port will again revive

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau

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home-made, linen underclothing and woollen outer garments being spun and woven by members of the household. Many of the peasants' houses contain only one living-room, with a big stove in the middle for heating purposes.

Homely Homes and Hospitality

This, besides being a source of warmth, also serves as an oven, while in winter several members of the family sleep on the top of it. Generally there is a large wooden bed in one corner, and when the weather is cold one of the family's sheepskin coats may be used as an extra coverlet. The room is completed by a table, one or two chairs, a bench, and a cradle, which is often suspended from the wooden rafters, where a slight push, periodically given, suffices to cause a rocking movement—an arrangement that saves the harassed housewife many hours of enforced idleness. A little crockery and a few pans finish off the inventory.

Even in the poorest homestead a charming hospitality awaits the stranger. Almost the moment he steps over the threshold he is welcomed as a guest; and if he be hungry, he will be supplied with rye bread and milk, artificially soured, both good to taste and full of sustenance. If it be summer, he will find placed before him a dish of deliciously-flavoured wild strawberries or other woodland berries, or, it may be, a platter containing some of the excellent mushrooms which abound in the forests, and which the peasants cook and eat as a special delicacy.

Hideous Devastation of War

The primal woodland regions are never far away, since nearly one-fourth of the country is still covered with the beautiful old forests for which Lithuania has for many centuries past been famous. Some parts even to-day are as thick and inaccessible as in the eighteenth century, when Lithuania was described as "impenetrable."

Both country and people have suffered inexpressibly from the devastations of war. From the very beginning of the

Great War Lithuania became the theatre of military operations; she was the first of the Baltic States to be invaded, and Lithuanian farmers at Wirballen heard the first German shots. From the moment the German troops surged over the frontier the great waves and billows of a fierce and pitiless warfare broke again and again over this unfortunate land. And the attacks of the enemy, though repulsed at the outset, nevertheless brought increased suffering to the inhabitants, for both belligerents burnt every village that lay in their path, at the same time systematically destroying the crops. The plight of the peasantry was pitiful. It is estimated that some 400,000 farms were ruined, and agriculture was brought utterly to a standstill.

Astonishing Resilience of the People

Thousands of families were made homeless, and the burnt and pillaged countryside presented a spectacle of indescribable misery and ruin. By the end of September, 1915, the Germans had overrun the entire country, and had entrenched themselves on the eastern front of Lithuania, where they remained until the end of the struggle with Russia. As the Germans made their advance the greater part of the refugees pressed eastwards towards Petrograd and Moscow, but the succour and assistance they received from various charitable societies could not mitigate the half of their sufferings or ward off the dread spectre of starvation which had followed them from the moment they had taken the open road. Numbers of them perished from hunger and disease; and a great desolation reigned among these war-stricken people, of whom some 250,000 had been driven from Lithuanian soil.

Yet the moment a more peaceful outlook presented itself the surviving Lithuanians returned to their ruined land and started at once to repair the havoc and damage. Such is the sturdy nature and indomitable spirit of the people. A recovery, quick and far-reaching,



WHEN JEW AND GENTILE MEET TO CLINCH A BARGAIN

In the smaller towns of Lithuania the thoroughfares are lined with Jewish establishments of a most unostentatious description, and in the absence of suitable windows, the wares are ranged about the shop entrance in the open air. Wrangling accompanies each transaction, and notwithstanding the fact that the shopkeeper halves the price quoted, he seldom fails to secure the best of the bargain

Photo, Florence Farmborough



STREAM OF HOMELESS HUMANITY WINDING ACROSS THE WIDE TRACKS OF THE LEVEL LITHUANIAN COUNTRYSIDE
 All too familiar was this scene in Lithuania in the years of fighting. During the hostile invasion of their country in the Great War the people left their homes in tens of thousands, taking with them only such belongings as could be packed on their rude conveyances and driving the livestock before them. Artillery fire and deliberate plundering reduced Lithuania to little better than a desert, but the vicissitudes of fortune which they experienced could not shake their patriotism, and on the restoration of peace they returned, with numbers terribly thinned by famine and disease, to their native land

Photo. Enclosure No. 1.



LITHUANIAN GIRLS IN NATIONAL COSTUME TAKING PART IN A LEAGUE OF NATIONS CELEBRATION

In common with many other European countries, the national dress of Lithuania has altered with the times, and very few characteristic features of the traditional attire now survive. Apron-wearing is not strictly a Lithuanian fashion, but was borrowed from immigrants in comparatively recent days; the bodice also, which many women wear, often in red and green, but preferably in black, is said to have been brought into the country by the Salzbourgeois. In the Memel district the older forms of dress have not entirely disappeared, and at Tilsit, in 1907, there was a wonderful display of Lithuanian national costumes

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau.

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was the result. The Lithuanians, indeed, seem always to manifest a complete understanding of their own affairs; their talent for organization and taking the initiative bore good fruit even in these trying circumstances. Whatever had to be done, they did themselves. That they were Lithuanians brought to them but slight assistance from the outside world. Submerged under the despotism of Russia for many years, they were practically an unknown people.

by little the country began to resume a more normal aspect, and in this way, as a consequence of the loyalty of her sons, Lithuania came into her own once again. In February, 1918, the independence of the State was formally proclaimed, and in September, 1921, Lithuania was admitted a member of the League of Nations.

Since 1905-6 the Lithuanians have more than once vociferously demanded freedom for their country, and the scant



ENJOYING REST AND REFRESHMENT AFTER A HARD RIDE

Under a shady tree they are taking a well-earned rest after many long hours spent in the saddle. The Lithuanian trooper is a fine horseman, a fact due, perhaps, to his great love for and understanding of animals, and the horse in particular. It is said that many persons claim to be able to tell merely by seeing the horses whether they have been bred and cared for by Lithuanians

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau

The giant task of reconstruction, therefore, fell heavily on this war-worn people.

But as one man they rose to the occasion, and set themselves to work with the determination and hopeful strength of a new and independent people. Meanwhile, the intelligent element clearly understood that their own fate, as well as that of their compatriots, depended on all the energy and organizing ability they could command.

And so factories were established, schools set up, relief committees and other institutions inaugurated. Little

liberties tardily granted were accepted, fostered, and made full use of. Both Russians and Poles were again and again nonplussed by the astounding fortitude displayed by this valiant subject-people who, in the face of ever-increasing restrictions, succeeded in organizing and developing their national institutions and societies dealing with science, art, agriculture, and commerce. And they took care to preserve these institutions from Polish and Russian influences, for, with praiseworthy insistence, they were harbouring the hope of



ENGAGED IN PRAYER AT THE GRAVE OF A COMRADE

Lithuania was the last European country to abandon paganism, which survived until the end of the fourteenth century as the official religion, in favour of Christianity, and the majority of Lithuanians are Roman Catholics and renowned for their piety. The rising generation is brought up with a strong sense of religious duties, and the fervour of their faith is displayed in many a reverent act of devotion

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau



PRIEST CARRYING THE HOST AT THE HEAD OF AN EASTER PROCESSION

The Lithuanians are imbued with a deep religious spirit, and among their numerous superstitions are certain beliefs in the supernatural, heritages of their former paganism. The singing of hymns is essential to all religious and many secular festivals, and the sonorous voices that chant sacred melodies at the services may be heard in the cottage homes singing a verse of praise before each meal



FUNERAL TRAIN OF A LITHUANIAN PEASANT PASSING ON ITS WAY TO THE VILLAGE CEMETERY

This dreary little cortège, stamped with the simplicity and lack of outward display that distinguish all ceremonial connected with peasant life in Lithuania, is winding towards the cemetery, which during the turmoil and stress of the last few years has grown full to overflowing with wooden crosses. These Catholic people are temperamentally religious, and love the symbol of their faith, and large crosses and crucifixes—many of the latter beautifully carved in a richness and variety of ornamentation—are seen not only in the streets but in the street



LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT OPENING AN AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION AT KOVNO

The independence of the Lithuanian State was proclaimed in February, 1918, and her Government, which has been recognized by almost every other Government on the globe, is vigorously assisting the output of the various branches of agricultural and industrial activity. Of the whole population, about 4,800,000 persons, only a small percentage is in industrial employment, and much of the trade has remained in the hands of the Jews. The Ministry of Agriculture is devoting considerable attention to those branches of trade and industry which prepare the raw products of agriculture for export

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau



PICTURESQUE TEAMSTER ON A COUNTRY HIGHWAY

The weather-beaten face of this old Lithuanian is still full of an innate vigour, and he urges his laggard team forward with a stentorian voice warranted to wake all day-dreamers from their sleep. Although his cart is well packed with bales and goods which, in his capacity of carrier, he conveys to their various destinations, his kindly nature will never refuse a lift to a way-worn fellow-creature

completely severing themselves from foreign control in favour of freedom and political autonomy. It may be confidently asserted that the idea of an independent Lithuania, with the right to shape its own destiny and future, has been the guiding fundamental principle of the whole life of every class of the Lithuanian people.

During the several decades immediately prior to the Great War emigration had been robbing Lithuania of some of the strongest and healthiest of her sons. Tyranny was at the root of this. The ambitious elements among the Lithuanian youth found the conditions under which they lived unbearable. They were debarred from holding public and industrial positions; their projects in the world of commerce were incessantly being vetoed; political and economic

freedom there was none; even the land they tilled could not be called their own. At the first opportunity they made good their escape to a foreign land where they might find those political, economic, social, religious, and intellectual amenities of life which neither of their European foster-parents was willing to vouchsafe to them.

Lithuanian colonies, of some 15,000 persons, exist in Great Britain, particularly in Glasgow and other Scottish cities, and they have various societies amongst which Lithuanian newspapers are published. The largest emigration, however, has been to the United States of America, and here some 750,000 Lithuanians have their homes. About 80,000 of these are to be found in or near Chicago, and 40,000 in Greater New York. But since Lithuania has

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been freed from the numbing grip of the Russian bureaucracy and become an independent country, her sons and daughters are flocking back to their homeland. Most of these returning exiles have kept up their mother tongue and taught it to their children, so that on their arrival they can easily converse with their own people. This illustrates how genuine a sentiment was that which expressed itself many years before the overthrow of the Tsardom, that they should be allowed self-government and liberty to speak their own tongue.

The feelings of the Lithuanian emigrants are naturally divided between their mother-country and the countries of their present residence which have done much for their education in the principles of democracy and self-reliance. Hundreds of those now returning home from across the Atlantic are imbued with new ideas and new methods. They understand the English language, and through them the masses of their countrymen, whether in towns or in

sequestered parts of the country, are becoming acquainted with the spirit of the institutions of Great Britain and the United States, and are only too anxious to meet English-speaking peoples in various fields of activity. (It is worthy of note that the English language has now been made compulsory in the Lithuanian schools.) Those who returned from exile before the Great War, having "reaped the benefits of education and culture, freely and unhindered," were looked up to as the apostles of freedom, and it was not long before Lithuanians began to ask themselves why liberty, possible in other countries, was not possible in their own native land.

Lithuania has seen difficult days since her independence was proclaimed. No sooner did she succeed in surmounting one trouble than another appeared on the horizon. She has had but little chance to carry on her arduous and complex task of completing her internal organization, for repeated interruptions have hindered a free evolution, which



CRITICISING A LIKELY DEAL AT A LITHUANIAN HORSE-FAIR

A horse-fair is the occasion for much voluble argument and fiery interchange of eloquence, for most of the peasants are passable connoisseurs of horseflesh, and anxious to display their knowledge when opportunity offers. Horses, big and small, thin and well-proportioned, are there in vast numbers, and the dealer has an anxious moment as his animal is paraded before the keen-eyed judges

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau



HOMELY TILLERS OF THE LITHUANIAN SOIL

Never so happy as when working in the fields, the Lithuanian peasant willingly exerts much physical effort in the cultivation of his small holding, and the crops produced tally with the labour expended and seldom fail to meet his expectations. Simple in his tastes, he adheres staunchly to old-time customs, and the remark: "My father used to do that," amply justifies his conservatism

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau

can make no definite progress while the strength of the country is being expended in repulsing external aggression. Lithuania needs peace before anything else; the struggle of political forces is strangling her prosperity before it has had an opportunity of proving its existence.

The River Niemen (in Lithuanian Nemunas, i.e., navigable), the chief artery of commerce in Lithuania, is 910 verst (1 verst = $\frac{3}{4}$ mile) in length, of which 832 are navigable and 46 available for rafting. The port of Memel (Klaipeda), together with the district, is now included in Lithuanian

territory. It is undoubtedly the proper fate of Memel to belong to Lithuania, whose tribes held it in antiquity, and who has never severed her connexion with the port, seeing that the whole of its pre-war trade was Lithuanian. Now that Lithuania has secured free access to the west, and a sea outlet through which her future trade may pass, she will be able to further her economic position which, in the past, with an enormous balance of exports over imports, gave vivid proof of her industrial powers. Situated as she is on the best highways of Europe, her position when in possession of fixed

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frontiers, security and peace, should be most prosperous, and it is certain that sooner or later Lithuania will resume her place in the European Commonwealth.

The Lithuanians are a blonde, blue-eyed race, with tall, strong, well-knit figures. They work hard; they look ahead; they are thrifty and persevering. The cooperative system flourishes among them, and, although the Great War brought all stores to a standstill, they reopened as soon as they could and are developing well. Cooperation in the sense of economic mutual aid also relates to agricultural pursuits, and is

usually known under the name of "Talka." The Talka gathers together at certain times of the year to perform various rural occupations which require the employment of many workers, such as harvesting, mowing, transport of timber, and many other agricultural tasks. It is strictly understood that no payment is accepted, but the moral obligation to return the favour rests with all alike.

Almost every gathering of the country population is characterised by a remarkable sobriety of attire. In some districts, on special occasions, the girls and



AT HOME WITH THE STOUT-HEARTED LITHUANIAN PEASANT.

The peasantry of Lithuania accommodated themselves with much tranquillity to the distressful days which heralded the approach of freedom for their country. Driven this way and that they submitted fearlessly to the dictates of a cruel destiny, and there are many courageous hearts who, robbed of their all, can sit at the door of their new home and still look hopefully into the future

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau



FLYING OFFICERS IN A CORNER OF A LITHUANIAN AERODROME

The art of the aeroplane is cultivated with an ever-growing enthusiasm in Lithuania, and there is no lack of interested spectators at the aerial pageants when the technical knowledge of the members of the flying corps is put to the severest test. This group of officers, with the chief of the Lithuanian aviation on the right, is watching the correction of artillery fire by means of aeroplanes

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau

women still wear the old costumes of their ancestors. In the region around Memel these are very picturesque, but American influence, which seems likely to be so strong, will eventually sweep away these pretty relics of the past. Men's dress is already being rapidly modernised. The bowler hat and the ready-made tweed suit are fast replacing the broad-brimmed hat and the elaborate costume that even twenty years ago could be seen on high days and holidays.

Having always kept their own names for their towns, the Lithuanians now insist upon using them, somewhat to the discomfort of travellers. However, people who have been forbidden for a long time to use their own language must be excused, perhaps, for seeming a little inconsiderate, now that they are themselves free to impose it upon others. All the more allowance must be made if such a people possess an ancient history of which they are proud and have only just been able to feel that they are in a position to carry on the traditions of long ago.

Their literature is rich though not large, and they have a wealth of folk-tales, poems, and songs which are learnt by every child, whose poetical and dramatic tastes are thus developed. To this cultivation of imaginative powers their religion adds. Lithuanians are much attached to the Roman Catholic Church. About the country, on the roadsides, crucifixes may be seen; whilst on Sundays both the country folk and the people of the smaller towns are very regular in attending service. After Mass is over, a gathering of the neighbourhood takes place for gossip and chat, chiefly about the crop prospects; so that church-going has a social as well as a devotional side to it.

In the towns the Jews, many of whom wear their traditional gabardine and fur cap or low-crowned felt, and still allow shiny ringlets to hang down the sides of their faces, are considerably in the majority as against the Lithuanians, for the latter do not like town life, and show little inclination to desert the land for factories or for

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offices. The Jews, therefore, appear destined to continue to play an important part in the life of the country. Almost the whole of the trade of Lithuania is in their hands; none of it on a large scale—mostly shopkeeping. They have their schools and almost their own system of self-government, for there is a Ministry of Jewish affairs, and they are allowed to elect a central council, with local councils under it, which has authority to levy taxes for educational, religious, and social purposes. Only a very small percentage of the whole population, which is about 4,800,000 persons, is in industrial employment; any attempt to harass the Jews would make development in this direction next door to impossible. That the Lithuanian leaders should have granted such a measure of autonomy shows that they are men of enlightenment, and proves that the tolerant teaching of the national organ, "The Dawn," which,

despite the ban on the Press, has been voicing the desire for independence since 1883, has not been in vain.

The Lithuanians are already beginning to make their influence felt in the development of the new Baltic countries. They have never renounced their right to independence or paused in their struggle to attain that end; but they do not intend to make independence their sole and final object. It has been said that "nowhere does the humanitarian spirit, the idea of cooperation, solidarity, and unity of purpose for all mankind flourish so abundantly as among the smaller nations," and this is certainly true where Lithuania is concerned, for she is ever ready to take into account all the political and economic suggestions that come to her from beyond her own borders, which may aid in the development of her native culture and contribute to the social evolution of mankind and the brotherhood of men in general.



FIRST-CLASS FLYING OFFICERS OF THE FIRST SQUADRON

These are a few of Lithuania's airmen who have achieved a high reputation in her winged corps. The Great War gave them golden opportunities and thrilling experiences, and air cadets of that period are now fully-fledged officers, perfectly at home in an aeroplane, whose skill and courage appeal to all who have witnessed their daring exploits in the world of ether

Photo, Lithuanian Information Bureau



FRESH-CUT SWATHS OF SCENTED HAY IN A LUXEMBURG MEADOW

After a spell of vigorous work that will provide the hungry cattle with winter fodder, the mower pauses to whet his long-handled curving blade. He can look with satisfaction on the area he has covered of this quiet field whose peace is little disturbed by the swish of the scythe and its vigorous sideways thrust as it sweeps to and fro among the tall grasses that topple at its touch